

KENTUCKY UNIONISTS OF 1861.



ADDRESS

— OF —

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OF LEXINGTON, K. Y.

LATE CAPTAIN AND A. A. G., U. S. VOLS.

READ BEFORE THE

Society of Ex-Army and Navy Officers

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COMMANDER, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

In accepting the invitation of the Committee from the "Society of Ex-Army and Navy officers," I did so with many misgivings as to my own fitness.

The subject demands perfect accuracy of historical statements, and, without doing unnecessary hurt to the preconceived and doubtless honest sentiments of many in my own State, I shall endeavor at the same time to be entirely just to the early Union men of southern, slave-holding Kentucky. I shall not shrink from the task, even if not voluntarily chosen ; and while I shall not endeavor to conceal the mistakes and false steps of the Unionists, neither shall I pass over in silence the glaring inconsistencies, sinister scheming and wicked purposes of the secessionists.

You have selected as my subject, the "Kentucky Unionists of 1861 ;" and in order that you may be entirely impartial in your judgment of their intentions and accomplishments, you must not by comparison associate Kentucky with your own, or that of any other non-slave-holding, or northern State. You must look upon her as she really was in 1860-61, and I think you will readily admit, that by force of education and association, the tendencies of her people were more natural toward the South than the North, more toward slavery than freedom. I grant you that to look back to so dark a period is difficult, surrounded, as you now are, by the dazzling brilliancy of the stupendous advancements and wondrous achievements of the past quarter of a century.

I shall not speak of political parties, nor mention the names of men with greater frequency than is absolutely necessary, and should I be so unfortunate as to say aught that may be in the least degree objectionable to any one of my hearers, I beg that it may be remembered how remote is the time of which I am speaking.

Kentucky has never borne an insignificant part in the history of our country, and whether in the din and shock of battle, or in the more ennobling fields of statesmanship and jurisprudence, her sons have won conspicuous and enduring fame. Standing as she did in 1861, a slave-holding State, with slave-holding laws, and, to a certain degree, with their natural accompaniments of prejudice and passion, bounded equally by free and slave States, even then her sons, though not at the time her citizens, were the very embodiment of the hopes, the aspirations, aye, the destinies of the whole American people.

The wild, reckless passion of the South, whose hope it was to disrupt the Union and make slavery perpetual, in defiance of law and contempt of opposition, with that over-bearing and rebellious spirit characteristic of the people and the times, selected as its chieftain, Jefferson Davis.

On the other hand, in perfect conformity with the Constitution of the United States, and the laws made in pursuance thereof, there was inaugurated as the President of this great Republic, another Kentuckian by birth, who was destined to inspire the patriotism, quicken the conscience, ennoble the thought, and strengthen the love of country with the holiest devotion and Christian sincerity—the immortal Abraham Lincoln.

The election of this, the first republican President, was eagerly seized upon by the secessionists of the South as a happy incident, by which they hoped to inflame the passions and excite the fears of their less ardent followers, and the more quickly compass their long-cherished object, a disunion of the States.

A majority of the people even of the seceding States—

with possibly one or two exceptions—did not go into the rebellion free-willed and cheerfully, however true to the cause, and zealous in its support they may have afterward been.

Those of Virginia and Tennessee—without mentioning others—are notable illustrations.

None understood better than did the secession leaders the subordinating influences of forms of law, and through the official machinery of State governments, however unjustly or recklessly obtained, they knew only too well how to crush into the earth all who stood in the way of their violent assumptions.

Compact organizations kept them always mindful of their own strength, as well as familiar with the salient points of the opposition.

Secessionists always knew to whom to talk, and with whom to act. The Unionists were without any preconceived line of action, distrustful of almost every one, and while keeping their powder dry, looked probably more than they should to the purity of their hopes, and sincerity of their belief, to extricate them happily from their troubles.

The men in Kentucky who loved their country, and resolved deep down in their inmost hearts to stand by the Union and the Stars and Stripes, even unto death, instinctively began as early as August, 1860, to ward off secession, by voting for a candidate for Clerk of the Court of Appeals—the only State officer elected at that time—who was well known to be warmly attached to the Union.

The disruption of the Democratic Convention, at Charleston, had displayed the cloven foot of possible secession, and twenty-three thousand majority for a Union candidate was the response Kentucky gave.

This was followed up a few months later by the larger number of the followers of Douglas and Lincoln casting their votes for Bell, that there might be no mistake as to the Electoral vote of Kentucky being cast against her own citizen candidate, the same, who had four years before in the posi-

tion of second on the ticket, changed Kentucky from a Whig, or American, to a Democratic State. No surer test of her earnestness in the cause of the Union, and perfect subordination of the highest personal regard and admiration to patriotic principle could have been made; for John C. Breckinridge, at that day, justly occupied a proud position in the hearts of nearly all Kentuckians. Against any other candidate the Union vote of Kentucky, though 13,000 in majority, would have been perceptibly increased.

At this election, did Kentucky, for the second time, give unmistakable evidence of her Union spirit. South Carolina did not wait for an "overt act" from the incoming President, but before the year had closed severed her connection with the Union in a bombastic manner, strikingly in contrast with her subsequent humiliating return.

On the 14th of April, 1861, the "Confederate Armies" caused the capitulation of the gallant defenders of Fort Sumter, and along with that of his brave comrades should go down to posterity for emulation and reverence, the name of that patriotic, Union-loving Kentuckian, Robert Anderson.

It must be particularly noted that the State officers and members of the Legislature of Kentucky who held office in the Autumn of 1860 and Spring of 1861, were elected in 1859, a period at least when the country at large was unsuspecting of any serious secession movement.

'Twas to the Governor then elected Mr. Lincoln addressed his request—made the day after the capitulation of Fort Sumter—for volunteers to assist in subduing the Rebellion, and his hasty and falsely prophetic response that, "Kentucky would furnish no troops for the wicked purpose of subduing her sister Southern States," certainly did not mark him as one around whom the Unionists could rally with security, though it is but justice to Gov. Magoffin to say, that his high sense of honor prevented him from doing many things to which his sympathies inclined him.

How nearly the Legislature, elected at the same time and

by the same majority that carried him into power, came to sustaining the response of the Governor, it shall now be my province to show.

The census of 1860 made Kentucky the ninth State in population in the Union, and in a total of 1,555,684 souls there were 225,483 slaves.

During the month of November, 1860, "Union" meetings were held in various portions of the State, and one of the first Union speeches came from a Kentucky Senator, who warmly defended that portion of President Buchanan's message, denying the right of secession, against the fierce attack of a Senator from North Carolina.

About Christmas the Governor of Kentucky was importuned, by an accredited commissioner from Mississippi, to call an extra session of the Legislature, "for the adoption of efficient measures for their common defense and safety."

The Legislature met in called session, January 17, 1861, and to the action of that body the eyes of the whole country were turned. The secessionists of the South, with full knowledge of the political complexion of its members, with seeming confidence awaited the result. The "State Guard," the only authorized military organization in the State, I say plainly, was formed and used, as far as it was possible, in the interests of the Rebellion, to intimidate and over-awe Union sentiment. The act authorizing the "State Guard" became a law March 5, 1860, and stipulated that the "Inspector-General" should be Commander-in-Chief. Its Commander, by appointment of the Governor, was Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner, of whom it may be remembered, preferred later on at "Fort Donelson" an "unconditional and immediate surrender" to an immediate assault upon his works. Only a failure to secure arms lessened the mischief this organization was designed to commit.

The Legislature, mindful of its tendencies, refused adequate appropriations, notwithstanding which, the Governor sent L. P. Blackburn to Arkansas, and Gen. Buckner North,

to procure the necessary arms. Blackburn only succeeded in obtaining a few unserviceable guns, and Buckner was very early and suggestively turned from his part of the mission.

To the course the Legislature would pursue, the Union men looked with more hope than confidence, and an account of the three months battling in that body for supremacy, would in itself take longer time than your patience would allot me. The members who had supported Bell and Everett were mostly, but not all, for the Union.

The Douglas men were badly divided, and the Breckinridge men, with four honorable exceptions, were for disunion to a man. I could not feel that I had done my duty did I fail to name those true, brave, and patriotic men, who, to use their own language, determined to “cast party ties to the dogs, and work with any and all men for the preservation of the Union.” They were Thornton F. Marshall and John A. Prall in the Senate, and R. T. Jacob—afterward a colonel in the Union Army—and Rob’t A. Burton, jr., in the House.

The accession of Messrs. Jacob and Burton gave the Unionists a bare majority of one in the House, and it is impossible, in my estimation, to overvalue the services of these men to the Union cause. Had they chosen to act with their party associates, and not followed the teachings of patriotism and love of country, certainly a calamity, much greater than Kentucky experienced, would have been her lot, and correspondingly extended to the entire country. I beg that you will not interpret this to mean that under any circumstances whatever could the Unionists of Kentucky have been driven into rebellion, even had the State formally seceded. For, though in the general upheaval of things, some of the weak and doubting may have been lost from sight, the great body of Kentucky loyalists would have done then as they did later—thrown their support unreservedly for the Union. The fact that nearly eighty thousand white Kentuckians wore the blue and followed the Stars and Stripes relieves this statement of all semblance of empty boasting.

But to return to the trials and anxieties of the Unionists of the Legislature. Had the one majority—before alluded to—been perfectly reliable, a dozen could not have been more effective ; but such, unfortunately, was not the case.

There were five or six doubtful and unstable members, beside a few others who kept themselves so full of one of the principal products of the State as to leave but little room for patriotism to dwell. It was incumbent upon the Unionists not only to watch these men with unremitting care, but guard closely against the covert enemy, and the constantly increasing encroachments of the rebels without.

Much has been said and written in derision of “ Kentucky Neutrality,” and the subject, whenever mentioned, is prone to excite either laughter or contempt. How could a State, it is asked, act independently of the Government without being in rebellion? or of what avail would a position of neutrality be without the physical power to enforce it against both belligerents? Nothing could be more ridiculous than the position Kentucky is supposed to have occupied in her chosen attitude of “ neutral ;” but the absurdity of so untenable a position may not be so great when all the surrounding circumstances are correctly understood. Every movement of the opposing Legislative factions—so painfully equal numerically—had but one meaning and object, viz : Secession or Union. The one party did whatever, in its opinion, would lead Kentucky to join the Confederacy. The other left nothing undone—possible to accomplish—which tended to hold the State true to her allegiance. This was all there was embodied in the numberless votes, speeches and resolutions, of that memorable body, and its every act can only be properly judged in reference to this one vital question. What lesser subjects may have demanded, none received great attention, and though it may not have been a battle of the giants, it was, nevertheless, a fierce, bitter, unrelenting struggle between treason and loyalty, and in the end a just God gave the victory to the patriots.

More than once, at critical junctures, did the noted secessionists throughout the State assemble at Frankfort to brow-beat and threaten the Legislators. But as soon as the telegraph could summon them, there came to meet this blustering crowd as stout-hearted loyalists and as courageous men as ever breathed.

Nor must it be accepted as true that there were wanting on the floor of either House, Unionists bold enough to denounce treason, and brave enough to defy the traitors. Said one in the Senate: "When Kentucky goes down it will be in blood. Let that be understood. She will not go as other States have gone. Let the responsibility rest on you, where it belongs. It is all your work, and whatever happens will be your work. We have more right to defend our Government than you have to overturn it. Let our good Union brethren of the South stand their ground. I know that many patriotic hearts in the seceded States still beat warmly for the old Union—the old Flag. I have an abiding confidence in the right, and I know that this secession movement is all wrong." The disunionists felt that their greatest strength was with the present Legislature, and if anything of interest to them was accomplished, it must be done by it. On the other hand, the Unionists had every reason to believe that, if it were possible to ward off secession by this Legislature, they had nothing to fear from the one soon to be elected. They were, on all proper occasions, ready and willing to appeal to the people, having perfect confidence in their patriotic devotion to their country; and this confidence was never at any time misplaced.

The Governor, in his message, recommended the calling of a sovereignty convention, for the purpose of determining the question of secession. This the Unionists resisted, preferring not to sanction any movement questioning the loyalty of the State, and the proposition was defeated, though by a bare majority. Very soon afterward, however, the opposing parties were brought again face to face, on the question of

“armed” or “mediatorial neutrality,” a distinction many may urge without a difference.

But there was a wide and wonderful difference in the minds of those who drew the distinction. “Armed neutrality,” which meant the display of force against both sides, was the work of the secessionists, and acquiesced in by the Unionists only through their inability to defeat it. “Mediatorial neutrality,” which sought to bring about a peace between the two sections, rapidly drifting into war, was the effort of the Unionists. Never did the Union men of Kentucky deny the right of the General Government to transport troops across the State, or to raise volunteers within its limits, to assist in preserving the National life. All such opposition, and wide mouthed clamor, for a rigid observance of Kentucky’s neutrality, came from rebels, and those in sympathy with them. The Union men, in their multiplicity of embarrassments, only asked the forbearance of the Government in tiding over the interval until a general election. And in this course they had the sanction of the highest authority. Mr. Lincoln said that he “hoped Kentucky would stand by the Government in the present difficulties; but if she would not do that, let her stand still and take no part against us.” Kentucky fondly hoped, and with the utmost sincerity, that in some way an amicable adjustment might be reached, whereby bloodshed could be avoided, and the Union, with its manifold blessings, remain intact. Gladly would she have sacrificed anything, save her honor and position in the Union, to have restored fraternal feeling, and reconciled every estranged heart. Why should she be censured for indulging such exalted hopes? Should her dream be ruthlessly brushed aside as more than chimerical, when the President of the United States called only for three months’ men, and the great Secretary of State openly proclaimed the war would not last ninety days? Further than this, General Sherman, in his memoirs, says that he saw Gen. Patterson’s army cross the Potomac in 1861, and there he “talked a good deal with his friend and classmate, Geo. H.

Thomas ; also with Gen. Cadwallader and the staff officers of Gen. Patterson, Fitz John Porter, Belger, Beckwith, and others, all of whom seemed encouraged to think that the war was to be short and decisive, and that as soon as it was demonstrated that the General Government meant in earnest to defend its rights and property, some general compromise would result."

I will now let speak one of the principal actors in the Kentucky Legislature, as to the true meaning of the course pursued by him and his associate Unionists :

"Our opponents wanted a sovereignty convention. We did not. Kentucky loved the Union with a deep and unalterable love. She loved every section and every part of the great country that had been bequeathed to us, as a rich heritage, by the heroic men of the Revolution, and by Almighty God. She wanted no divided and limited inheritance. She determined to lend her great energies, first to make peace, if that was possible ; and if that could not be achieved, she determined to stand by the Union if the richest blood in her veins poured out like water, and at all hazard."

Those I may add were sentiments common to Union men.

On May 4, 1861, an election was held for delegates to the "Border States Convention," which proved to be a one-sided affair. The rebels, seeing overwhelming defeat staring them in the face, withdrew their candidates ; and even without opposition the Union delegates received 98,561 votes, being nearly two-thirds of the aggregate vote, at the Presidential election, the year previous. Kentucky and Missouri were the only States represented, though I believe Tennessee did have one delegate, and, in their formal address, it was declared that "the direct question before the people of the United States, and of Kentucky, the grand and commanding question was, Union or no Union, Government or no Government, Nationality or no Nationality. That Kentucky had no cause of complaint with the General Government, and no cause of quarrel with the Federal Constitution ; that Kentucky would continue to be loyal to the Constitution, the Government and

flag of the United States, and refuse alliance with any who would destroy the Union, or commit the great wrong of deserting their posts in the National Congress; that Kentucky would remain true to herself, and loyal to the Constitutional administration of the General Government; appear again in the Congress of the United States, insist upon her Constitutional rights in the Union, not out of it, and insist on the integrity of the Union, its Constitution, and its Government."

About this time the Governor again asked for authority, to order an election for delegates to a State Convention, which the Legislature refused, and adjourned on the 24th day of May *sine die*.

Before this date regularly organized troops had left the State, with drums beating and flags flying, for the avowed purpose of joining the Confederates. The Governor renewed his effort to procure arms for the State guards, and the Union men thought it best to dispense with "grass throwing" and resort to weapons more in keeping with the times.

There returned, at this time, to his mother State, a man, who for years had been serving his country in distant waters, who at once imparted his own enthusiasm to all with whom he came in contact. Brusque, perhaps, in manners; rough, too, he may have been in language, but Wm. Nelson's love of country was as pure as the billows upon which he sailed, and his bravery and patriotism as expauseless as the ocean itself. 'Twas through his endeavors that arms were procured in Washington for the home guards, who were not slow to confront the State guards. Five thousand stand of arms being judiciously distributed among faithful and reliable Union men, imparted additional security to all, and relieved the more timid of all fear of State guard intimidation at the approaching elections. These arms—derisively called by the rebels, "Lincoln guns"—which were given to the various "home guard" companies, quickly solved a hitherto vexatious and difficult problem. The Unionists felt perfectly confident to care for themselves, provided the means of protection were placed in their hands.

They stood in constant danger of being overrun by armed rebels from Tennessee, who menaced the State all along its southern border. Arms, the one thing needful for complete protection, they had not, and how to acquire them was a matter of no little concern. That arms could be procured had been demonstrated by Nelson, but the difficulty of placing them in the hands of Unionists only, without provoking a conflict, was a much more serious matter.

It was finally determined that arms should be sent to Cincinnati, subject to the orders of Gen. Nelson, who in turn would issue them, upon requisitions signed by Joshua F. Speed, to such men and organizations as were known to be trustworthy. To send arms to Louisville, Maysville, and other places on the Ohio river, was of easy accomplishment, and unattended by danger or undue excitement, but when the news of such distribution reached the interior of the State, there were the wildest uproar and dissent.

Nothing more than a plain statement of facts, in regard to the manner in which these arms were distributed, would, even at this day, with all the experiences of the war before us, read like a thrilling romance. The names of the brave men who followed the wagons bearing the arms—ready at any moment to defend them with their lives—are well known and gratefully remembered. The great service they rendered the State at that time was but the beginning of far greater and more important achievements upon the field of battle in behalf of an undivided Union. And I can only express at this time the great regret I feel at my inability to give you, in detail, an account of the heroic deeds of these patriotic men during the trying and troublous times of 1861.

June 20th a special election for Congress was held, and nine out of ten Union candidates were elected, by an aggregate majority of nearly 55,000. This result, though not unexpected, caused the greatest rejoicing amongst Union men, for they, as well as their friends, regarded it as a settlement of Kentucky's status. If anything were needed in addition to

this to blast the hopes of Kentucky rebels, it was furnished in the election which followed, August 5th, whereat seventy-six Union members of the House, to twenty-four States-rights men, and twenty-seven Union Senators to eleven States-rights men, including those holding over, were elected. This action of the people so definitely forecast the future course of the State, that there necessarily followed rapidly a culmination of important events.

Many Kentuckians, impelled by a true patriotism, too irresistible to await the slow progress of events in their own State, had, months before, crossed over into Indiana, and formed themselves into regiments, or joined other military forces of the United States. But in this month of August, "Camp Dick Robinson"—of historic fame—was organized in the very centre of the State, and served as a rendezvous for Kentucky volunteers, and East Tennessee loyalists fleeing from rebel conscription.

Sympathizers with rebellion did not under-estimate the dangerous possibilities of this growing camp, and the Governor was overrun with remonstrances against its continuance.

Strict "neutrality" had now become with the rebels a dearly cherished object, and their eyes dilated with surprise, and their countenances were overspread with horror, at the mere thought of its violation. It was considered no violation of good faith upon their part, to openly enlist and forward troops to the Confederacy; to do any and all things permitted by their personal safety to destroy the Government; but any effort upon the part of the friends of the Union to thwart their machinations inspired them with the greatest horror. Governor Magoffin wrote Mr. Lincoln: "As Governor of the State of Kentucky, and in the name of the people, I have the honor to represent, and with the single and earnest desire to avert from their peaceful homes the horrors of war, I urge the removal, from the limits of Kentucky, of the military force now organized and encamped within the State." In Mr. Lincoln's answer he said, "In all I have done in the premises, I have

acted upon the urgent solicitation of many Kentuckians, and in accordance with what I believed, and still believe, to be the wish of a majority of all the Union-loving people of Kentucky. While I have conversed on this subject with many eminent men of Kentucky, including a large number of her members of Congress, I do not remember that any one of them, or any other person except your Excellency, and the bearers of your Excellency's letter, have urged me to remove the military force from Kentucky, or to disband it." In consequence the President very wisely and justly refused in any manner to interfere. On September 3, 1861, Confederate troops, under Gen. Polk, occupied Hickman and Columbus, Kentucky towns on the Mississippi river; and on September 5th, Federal troops, under the command of a man who was destined to receive the sword of Lee at the final surrender, crossed the Ohio river and occupied Paducah, thus practically putting an end to neutrality, though the Rebels used their utmost endeavors to continue it in force, hoping still, perhaps, to seduce Kentucky into rebellion. On September 10th a States-rights convention was held in Frankfort, and as many of its members were afterward conspicuous upholders of the Confederacy, it was but natural, from their antecedents and proclivities, that they should advocate "strict neutrality" and the dispersion of Federal encampments.

With mock sincerity they promised that when Federal troops were removed they would then assist in driving the Rebels out. The Union men took an opposite view, and insisted that the Rebels should evacuate the State, without exacting any promises from the Federal troops. The Legislature—the one newly elected—being in session, passed a resolution, by seventy-one to twenty-six in the House, and twenty-five to eight in the Senate, instructing the Governor to "notify those concerned that Kentucky expects the Kentucky or Tennessee Confederate troops to be withdrawn from her soil unconditionally," and by a similar vote refused to make a like demand for the removal of the Federal troops. The Governor

vetoed the resolution, but it was promptly passed over his head, and thus ended, abruptly and forever, "Kentucky neutrality."

Indignation and resentment, at the invasion of the State by the Rebels, were aroused to the highest pitch, and the enthusiasm with which crowds volunteered to repel the intruders was in perfect accord with the hearty and gladsome welcome extended to Union troops then pouring into the State from all directions.

It will be observed that the Confederates entered the State soon after the election had resulted so disastrously to them, and just prior to the assembling of a States-rights convention. They did not receive the encouragement they had hoped for, and in subsequent marches of their armies through the State, and frequent incursions of their raiders, they were forced to admit their disappointment in enlisting recruits. After the people had spoken in such unmistakable tones at the August election, and the States-rights convention had borne so little fruit, some of the most prominent men in the State, though well known secessionists, failing in their persistent efforts to seduce the people into secession, began to fear for their own safety, and in the darkness of night, as befitted their cause, sneaked away, by twos and fours, into the Confederacy.

In the meantime recruiting went rapidly on. The forces of the Union and of the Confederacy were growing in numbers, to the magnitude they ultimately attained. "Camp Dick Robinson" received its complement of volunteers, and troops from without as well as within the State were concentrated there to repel an invasion from Tennessee. Gen. Nelson, who had been in command, was transferred to Eastern Kentucky—and there came after him to command these southern troops, on this southern line, a southern man, whose native State was then in active rebellion.

The fallacious and specious theory that State loyalty was paramount to National allegiance had no allurements for him.

Devoted as he was to his State, his great heart loved more dearly the entire Union, and with traitors on every hand, and in the midst of difficulties few had to encounter, George H. Thomas saw clearly his duty, and most nobly did he fulfill it. A nobler commander could not have been chosen, nor one better qualified to mould into soldiers the raw recruits flocking to his standard. The regiments formed at this camp, noticeably the 1st and 2d—afterward known as the 3d and 4th regiments of Kentucky Volunteer Infantry—two other Kentucky regiments and two Tennessee regiments, constituted the first brigade, first division of the army of the Cumberland; thus giving to Kentucky regiments the dominant honor of forming the *nucleus* of that wondrous and irresistible organization with which the name of Thomas is so inseparably and ineffaceably intertwined.

Van Horn, in his history of the army of the Cumberland, says: "From the time of the organization of this brigade, the number of troops embraced, their movements in the State, under the National colors, before any others, and its subsequent designation as the first brigade, first division, of the army, its claims as *the nucleus* are unquestionable." No mean distinction for any troops to enjoy, and Kentucky does not under-estimate this honor so gracefully bestowed upon her sons.

'Twas from this camp the troops marched to repel an invasion from Tennessee headed by the rebel Gen. Zollicoffer. I shall not attempt to describe the engagement—doubtless some of you were there in person—but only mention it as the first signal victory of the Federal arms, made more complete, probably, by the death of the rebel commander, who was killed by a Kentucky colonel.

In the light of subsequent events, what a misnomer it seems to call this engagement at "Mill Springs" a battle. Yet how grand the victory seemed at that time, coming as it did, the first bright flash from amid the gloom and darkness, which more than one defeat had caused to settle down upon

the entire loyal portion of the country. Bull Run had come and gone, with its immediate depression, but far-reaching benefits. The people had but awakened to a full realization that a stubborn war confronted them in all its naked hideousness. The loyal heart was bowed in sadness, the nation kneeled in prayer, and the stoutest patriot trembled for the future. It seemed as if blundering and apparent incompetency would never cease; when, upon lightning wings, was spread throughout the loyal North the happy intelligence of a Union victory in Kentucky. A thrill of joy pervaded every loyal bosom throughout the land, and every rebel was correspondingly dismayed. Many seized upon it as a bright omen of what was to follow, and cheerily prophesied that it would prove but the beginning of the end. Though the end was somewhat farther off than some of us supposed, and much more distant than any of us desired, yet from that day on, the Union grew in strength, and God continued to prosper the national cause until the culmination at Appomattox.

I have often associated this battle and its supposed far-reaching effects with a sketch intended to be prophetic of the downfall of slavery. Leisurely strolling along the Nevsky Prospect, in Russia's capital upon the beautiful Neva, a short while before the beginning of hostilities on this side, while in sight of the Czar's winter palace and under the shadow of the magnificent cathedral of St. Isaacs, with its golden plated domes, and grand columns inlaid with porphyry, malachite and lapis lazuli, my attention was diverted from all those interesting objects to a small card photograph in the window of an unpretentious bazar. Upon closer examination, I noticed a rude sketch of a man dangling by the neck from a rough and illy-constructed gallows. The foreground was all darkness, the background dark, save through the thickly surging black clouds a small, bright light had broken, and was reflected in soft hues upon the head of the otherwise dark figure upon the gallows.

The black surroundings were intended to represent slav-

ery; the light, breaking through the distance and resting on the head of the motionless figure, was Liberty; the figure itself, though rigid in death, speaking so eloquently in behalf of a down-trodden and sorely-oppressed people, was that of John Brown, the martyr.

The utter dissimilarity between a conflict of arms and a sketch upon canvas is admittedly great; but the verification of the prophecy concerning each followed upon parallel lines, and the collapse of the rebellion and the extinction of slavery came, as it was meet they should, at one and the same time.

A little earlier than the occurrences of which I have just spoken, Gen. Buckner, who had carried as many of the State Guard with him as possible—for it is but just to say that all were not disloyal—and formed a recruiting camp for the Confederacy in Tennessee near the Kentucky line, moved with his forces to Bowling Green, and issued his proclamation to the “People of Kentucky.” Still harping upon neutrality, the dearest of all things to the rebel heart, he was pleased to give “his own assurance” that the forces under his command would be used to aid the Governor to carry out the “strict neutrality desired by the people.”

Kentucky did not desire “assistance” of any kind from such a source, and with a loyal Legislature and her brave sons rapidly volunteering for active service, she felt content to take that position in the Union to which her heart was inclined, and her importance entitled her.

President Lincoln is reported to have said that “he would like to have God on his side, but he *must* have Kentucky.” And from that on he did have Kentucky; and those of you who were at any time thrown with Kentucky troops can testify as you may to their bravery and efficiency.

I am not unmindful of the sneers at her course, from the ignorant and prejudiced, nor of the reflections upon her loyalty by stay-at-homes from other States; and I beg your indulgence while I bring forward cotemporaneous authorities,

Northern and Southern, to speak of Kentucky's position in its true and proper light. A leading Northern journal said :

“Gentlemen endowed with more back bone than discretion, continue to speak contemptuously of the loyalty of Kentucky, but they will do well to remember how much the success of our army in the West has been owing to the attitude of that State. They will do well to remember that, had she gone over into the ranks of the Rebel States, the seat of war would have been transferred from the Cumberland and the Tennessee to the Ohio ; that instead of capturing Memphis and Nashville, we should be defending Cincinnati and St. Louis ; that instead of penetrating with our armies into the heart of the insurgent country, we should have all we could do during the winter and spring to defend our own frontier. They will do well to remember that Kentucky, even neutral, would be worth fifty thousand men to us ; that in her present loyal position she is potent almost to decide the fortunes of the war. Let us generously give her credit, not only for what she has done, but for what she has prevented. Let us admit that, without her aid, to-day the South-west would be irretrievably lost to the Union.”

Horace Greeley, in his book, the “American Conflict,” says that “Kentucky emphatically, persistently, repeatedly, by overwhelming majorities, refused—alike before and after the inauguration of war by the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter—to ally herself with the rebellion, or stand committed to any scheme looking to disunion in whatever contingency.” There could be no stronger Union testimony than this.

In support of it, however, though from a different standpoint, Pollard, in his *Southern History*, while seeking to compliment those men who left the border States to join the Confederacy, says :

“It is not to be supposed for a moment that while the position of Kentucky, like that of Maryland, was one of reproach, it is to mar the credit due to that portion of the people of each, who, in the face of instant difficulties, and at the expense of extraordinary sacrifices, repudiated the decision of their States to remain under the Federal Government, and expatriate themselves that they might espouse the cause

of liberty in the South. The honor due such men is, in fact, increased by the consideration that their States remained in the Union, and compelled them to fly from their homes, that they might certify their devotion to the South and her cause of independence. Still the justice of history must be maintained. The demonstrations of sympathy on the part of the States referred to—Kentucky and Maryland—considered either in proportion to what was offered the Lincoln Government by those States, or with respect to the number of their population, were sparing and exceptional; and although these demonstrations on the part of Kentucky, from the great and brilliant names associated with them, were, perhaps, even more honorable and more useful than the examples of Southern spirit offered by Maryland, it is unquestionably, though painfully true, that the great body of the people of Kentucky were active allies of Lincoln, and the unnatural enemies of those united to them by lineage, blood and common institutions.”

This, I submit, should be conclusive as to the overwhelming preponderance of Unionism in Kentucky. That the State ever in any wise aided rebellion, or faltered in true devotion to the Union, I utterly deny. That some of her sons gave active support to the rebellion—as many in other States were unmindful of their duties—I freely admit; but they did so in flagrant violation of their high-sounding professions of State loyalty, and in opposition to the wishes of an overwhelming majority of their own people, expressed freely and repeatedly at the polls. The infamous charge that Kentucky was coerced into loyalty is as baseless as it is contemptible. If the rebels were in the majority, what cowardly poltroons they must have been to have run away from so insignificant a minority as they would have you believe the Unionists were. No, I repeat emphatically that Kentucky was ever true to the Union. If in the beginning of our sectional troubles, from a disinclination to rush into a war with a people with whom there was so much in common, and from enforced circumstances which could not have been foreseen in time to avoid, she allowed herself even temporarily to assume a position of

questionable allegiance, her subsequent conduct gave such undeniable proof of her loyalty, that only the rebel, baffled in his treason, or the coward, made more secure through her patriotism, would dare to question either the purity of her motives or the wisdom of her course.

Upon a marble slab, contributed by Kentucky to the monument erected upon the banks of the Potomac to commemorate the veneration in which is held the "Father of his country," is the inscription: "Kentucky, the first to enter the Union; with the blessing of God she will be the last to leave it." In full accord with this patriotic sentiment, Kentucky has ever lived, and at no time have the services of her sons been required, from the early predatory Indian wars to the time of the great Rebellion, but their valor and patriotism were sufficient to place them in the fore-front of the battle. Her position was of an order high above the understanding of her detractors and maligners, and her losses, sufferings and sacrifices were second to those of no other commonwealth in the Union. She reached her decision to stand by the Union, not through waverings and doubts, but in sorrow and pain at the course pursued by those whom she loved only less than the Union itself. Gladly would she have put the cup from her lips; but neither friends nor kindred, the harrowing surroundings of the present, nor the more gloomy uncertainties of the future, could swerve her from her inflexible purpose to maintain through every trial the integrity of the Union she loved so well. In regard to the "peculiar institution" of slavery, neither its maintenance nor its downfall influenced in any way the course of a majority of our people. Mr. Lincoln, in his celebrated letter to Horace Greeley in 1862, but voiced the true sentiments of almost every Kentucky loyalist when he said: "If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this strug-

gle is to save the Union, and it is not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would do that."

But to return for only a moment to the Legislature, which took a recess until November 27th, and just before adjournment issued an address to the people, from which I quote :

"The Federal Government did not insist upon our active aid in furnishing troops, seeming content if we obeyed the laws and executed them on our own soil. Those engaged in rebellion, however, with hypocritical professions of friendship and respect, planted camps of soldiers all along our southern border; seized by military power the stock on our railroads within their reach, in defiance of chartered rights; impudently enlisted soldiers from our soil for their camps, whom they ostentatiously marched through their territory. They made constant raids into this State; robbed us of our property; insulted our people; seized some of our citizens and carried them away as prisoners into the Confederate States. Our military was demoralized by the treachery of its chief officer in command, and many of its subordinates, until it became more an arm of the Confederate States than a guard of the State of Kentucky. Thrice have the revolutionists appealed to the ballot box, and thrice have the people expressed by overwhelming majorities their determination to stand by the Union and its government. They have not been active in this war, not from indifference or want of loyalty, but in the hope of better promoting a restoration of the Union and checking the rebellion by that course. Our hope of an amicable adjustment and a desire for peace led us to forbear until forbearance has ceased to be a virtue. The attempt to destroy the union of these States we believe to be a crime, not only against Kentucky, but against all mankind."

Soon after the Confederate armies entered Kentucky the mock ceremony of holding a convention under their protection, and formally passing an ordinance of secession, was gone through with in the town of Russellville. This same convention elected also a Governor and other State officers for

Kentucky, and Senators and Congressmen to the Confederate Congress at Richmond. Probably this ridiculous performance would have been forgotten with the amusement which it occasioned, had not the attempt to formally inaugurate the Governor a year later at the capital of the State had so farcical a termination. The so-called first Governor had been killed at Shiloh, and the Lieutenant-Governor, succeeding to the empty honor, came with Bragg's army into the State and proceeded to Frankfort to claim his own. The rebels loudly proclaimed their intention and ability to permanently hold the State, and the programme for the "inaugural ceremonies" was elaborate in the extreme. But the Federal soldiery at that time had an unpleasant way of interfering with all Confederate amusements; and, in the height of the festivities, a shell from a cannon on an adjacent hill-top was an unwelcome messenger of the approach of the Union army. A pell-mell rush from the town carried with it the rebels and their sympathizers. The loyal Governor and Legislature returned, and the State Government and all its branches resumed its customary functions.

Stringent laws were passed against those who had entered the rebel army. All were expatriated, but the disabilities imposed upon them were promptly removed at the close of the war. Of Kentucky's course after the war, toward those of her sons who had so wantonly assailed her, I will let one of that number speak :

"Kentucky, true, generous and noble State; true and faithful daughter of that grand and glorious old mother, Virginia. She, when the clash of arms was passed, when carnage had left the earth, threw wide open her portals: she knew that her heart was large enough to embrace all her children, although they had pointed fratricidal arms against each other in the contest that was past. She erased from her statute books all her test oaths and test laws. She took us, her sons, back to her great and bleeding heart, remembering only the glories of the past, and forgetting all there was to sadden and bereave."

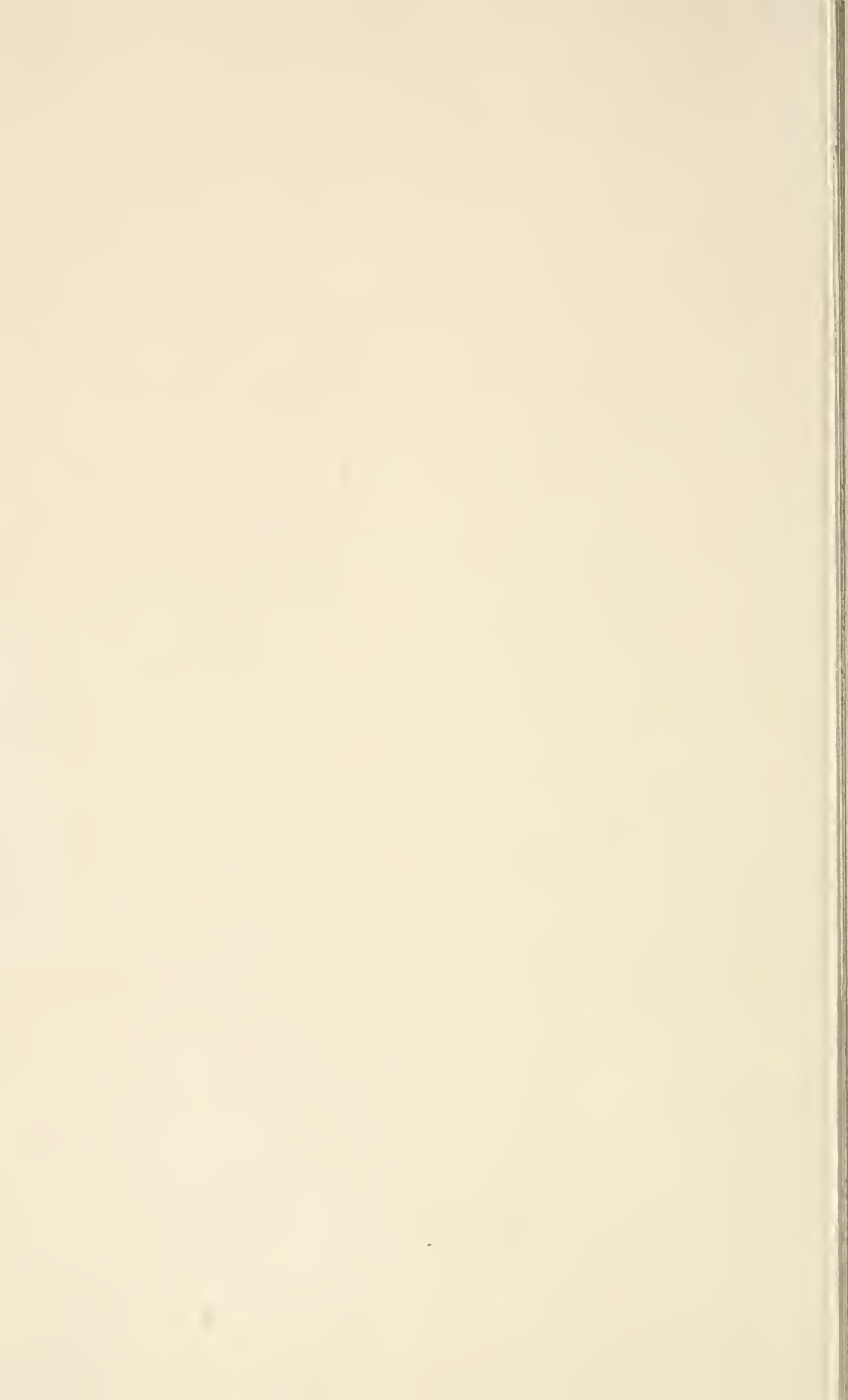
The leniency and clemency with which the returning rebels were treated was creditable alone to the generosity and kindheartedness of the Unionists, for it could not be truthfully said that the utter wantonness of their offenses were either misunderstood or under-estimated. It cannot be denied, however, and it pains me to say it, that, with characteristic and audacious effrontery, they have boldly assumed that the misdirected magnanimity which spared their lives and restored them to every privilege enjoyed by the Unionists, not only condoned their offenses, but invited them to subsequent aggressions against those who had shielded them, only different in form, but fully equal in ingratitude and wrong, to their thwarted attempts of 1861. I say this not with malice, but in deepest sorrow, and I can only hope that, even at this late day, the men who bore arms against the Union may incline to give as has been given to them, and learn that friendships and obligations to be true and binding, should be both sincere and reciprocal. The slight evidences discernible of this better feeling returning, may, I trust, continue to increase, until the only rivalry existing between those who wore the blue and those who wore the gray, may be an honest emulation as to who can lift higher the standard of pure government and an united Union, where all men are free and equal.

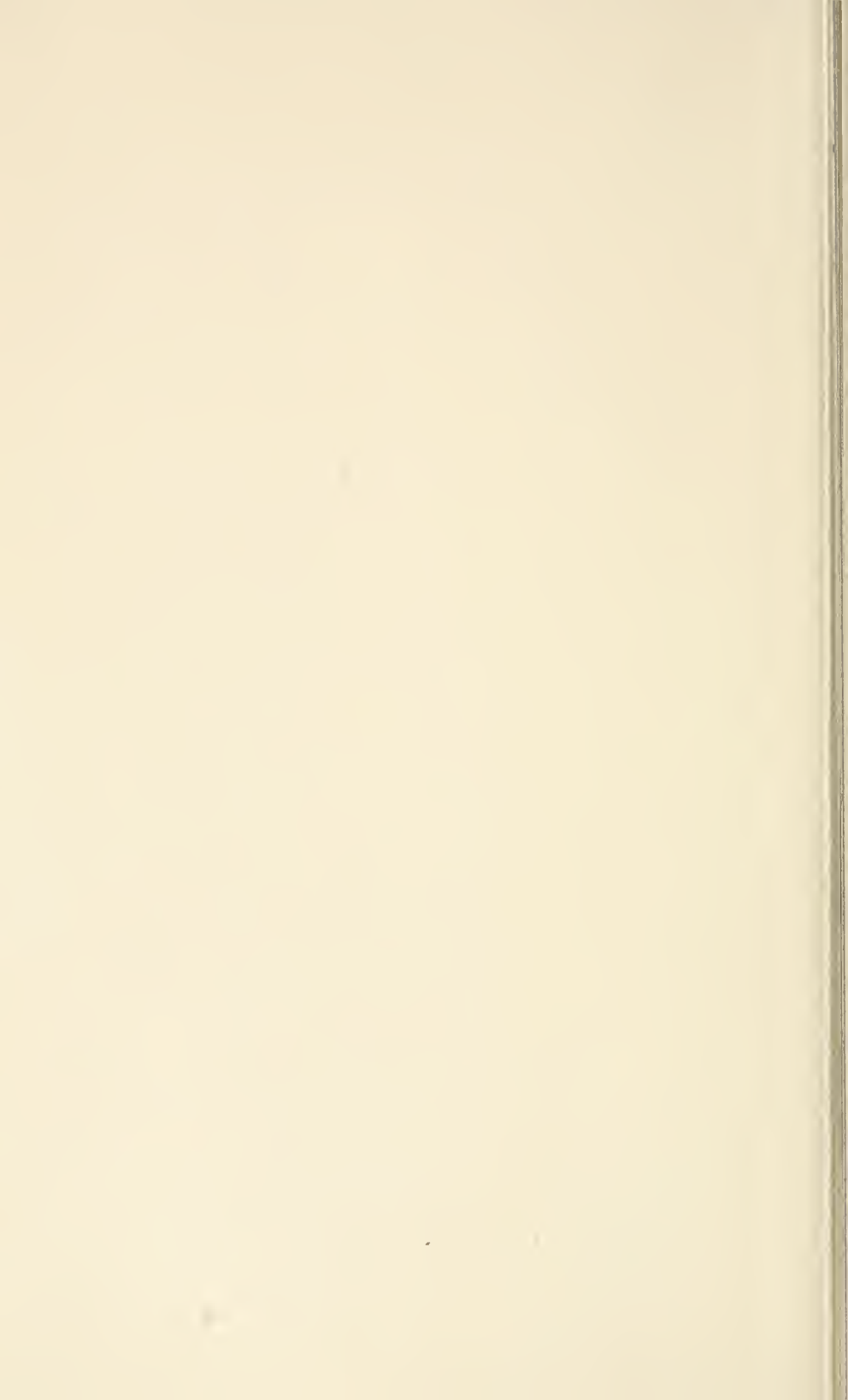
In conclusion, if in what I have said, I have succeeded in doing even partial justice to the true Union men of Kentucky, I shall be more than content. While their conduct was fully understood and properly appreciated by many, it seems to have been the province of certain pardoned rebels to misrepresent their course and malign their motives. Long silence and forbearance on the part of the Union men, instead of serving to soften criticism, has but emboldened their detractors to renewed and more envenomed attacks. 'Tis not to such that I appeal in vindication of our unsullied loyalty; for men who would destroy their country, would, with less compunction, stab the honor of its defenders. The loyal masses of the country, and the brave defenders of its integrity, are only

competent to sit in judgment upon our acts. To this tribunal we cheerfully and confidently submit our claims, for at least a portion of the credit due those who, in God's providence, brought about in His good time a full restoration of the Union.

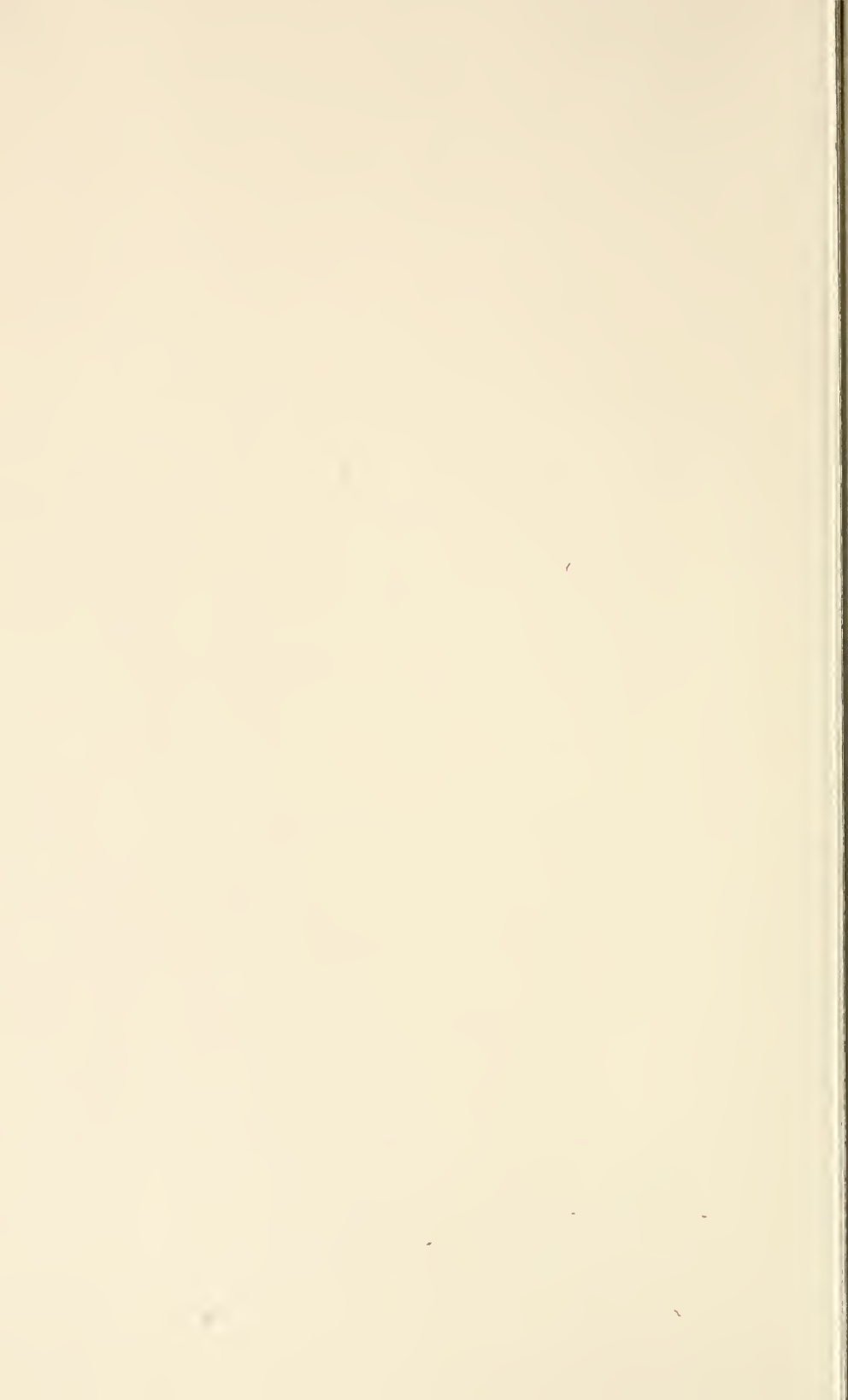
That the Union was saved is, I trust, alike grateful to every portion of the country. Look at America, as she is to-day, and who could wish her harm? Take a hurried trip over it, beginning from the granite hills of New England, on which are situated such beautiful cities, thriving towns, and busy manufactories. From the great city and State of New York, through the National Capital, with its wondrous public buildings; to the tobacco fields of Virginia; the pine forests of North Carolina; the cotton and rice fields of South Carolina; to the orange groves of Florida; through the States of Georgia and Alabama, rapidly increasing in manufactories, to the charming city of New Orleans, to which the whole cotton belt is tributary; the great agricultural and mining States of Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Tennessee and Kentucky; the rich prairie lands of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin, with their numberless thriving cities and varied industries; the limitless cattle ranges of the far West, even to the gold and silver ribbed mountains of the Sierra Nevadas. We pass on, gathering fruits and plucking beautiful flowers, through California to the flourishing city of Portland, Oregon, only to find ourselves equi-distant between the southern promontory of Florida, fragrant with orange blossoms, and the northernmost point of seal bearing Alaska. Was there ever a country of such resources and possibilities? Children should be taught to revere its institutions, respect its laws, uphold its honor, advance its interests; and with fifty millions of God-fearing, Union-loving people, what may we not hope to achieve in this our model "Government of the people, by the people, and for the people."

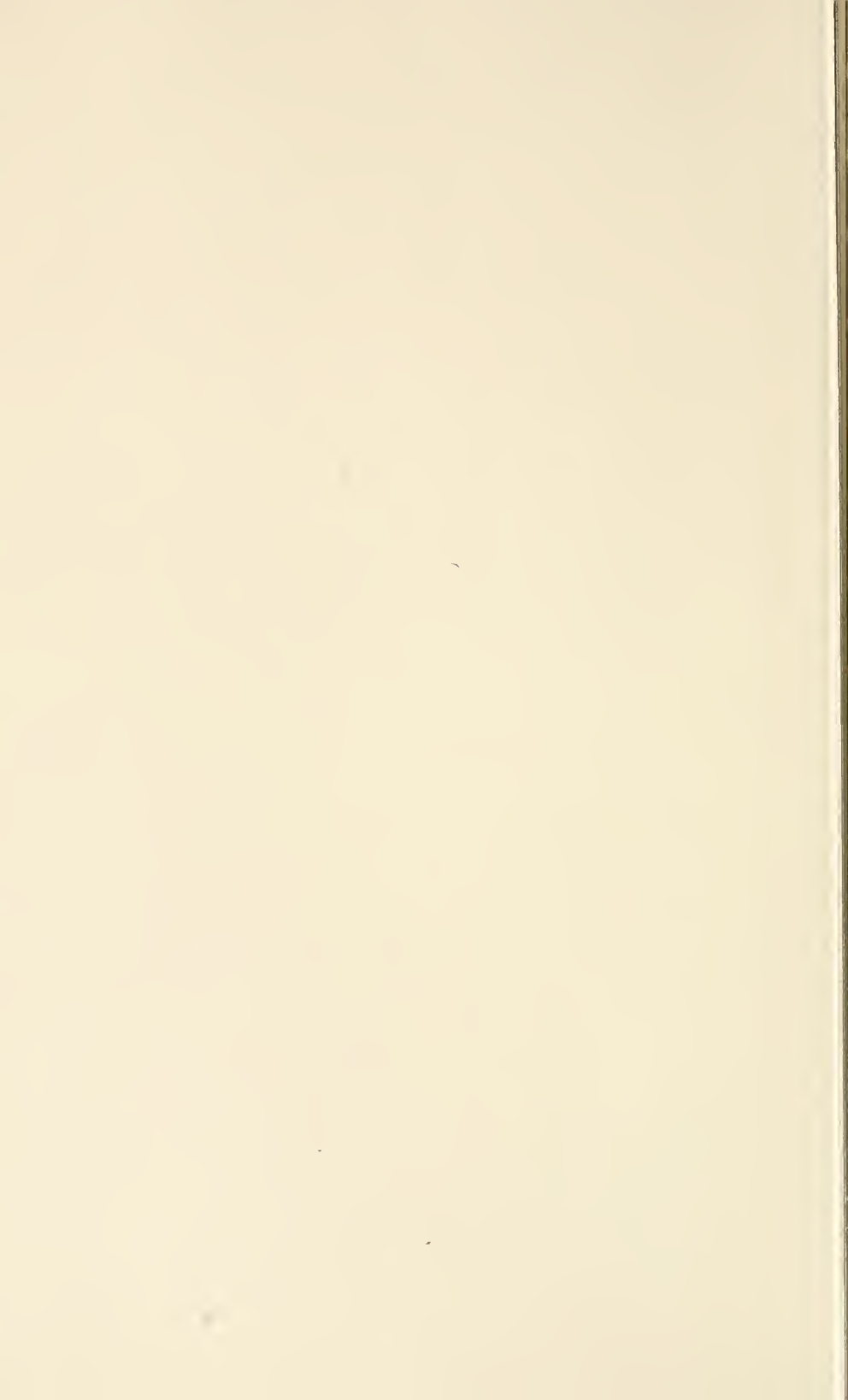


















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